

# The Importance of Cooperation Between Civil Society Institutions and Internal Affairs Bodies in The Development of Society

Zakir Zamonov

Associate professor, doctor of philosophy (PhD) in political sciences, Uzbekistan

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**Abstract:** This article substantiates that, in the context of today, civil society development organizations — which constitute the subjective foundation of a stable society—play an important role as institutionalized associations that, through establishing systematic cooperation with internal affairs bodies in ensuring human rights and freedoms, continuously studying the development of citizens' legal and political culture, and providing theoretical and practical support for transforming citizens into genuine members of civil society, fulfill not only socio-spiritual and political-legal functions but also act as significant social institutions.

**Keywords:** Stable society, civil society, social cooperation, human rights, social development, social partnership, social institutions.

**Introduction:** Throughout the course of history, refined spiritual foundations that have served as an important factor in social development have consistently maintained their relevance. In particular, the primary and priority direction of reforming the social life of society lies in liberalizing and improving spiritual life, thereby paying serious attention to human dignity, honor, and interests.

Indeed, this process — historically necessary and realized on the basis of the spirituality, enlightenment, traditions, customs, and values formed and developed by our people over centuries — is undoubtedly closely interconnected with national ideology.

In this sense, building the New Uzbekistan means studying our recent and distant history, as well as our unique and invaluable cultural heritage more deeply, relying on them, and continuing our independent path of national development at a new stage<sup>[i]</sup>. The path of national development is determined прежде всего by historical thinking, national self-awareness, and spiritual criteria, and it draws its strength from the level of spiritual life.

A person's spiritual freedom signifies self-awareness as

an independent and free agent. Human spiritual freedom manifests itself in a free attitude toward genuine values and in spiritual and creative freedom.

The means leading to development may be diverse; however, the principal criterion guiding it is the economic and spiritual foundation. Spiritual foundations, in turn, serve to enhance the level of spiritual life. As noted by Professor X. Akhmedov:

“During the process of social development, when society transitions from one stage of development to another, just as changes occur in the economic, social, and political spheres, certain transformations in its spiritual life naturally take place as well. In this complex and multifaceted process of renewal, all aspects and characteristics of spiritual life are formed as a new spiritual system that corresponds to the social structure of the new era and the demands of contemporary realities, differing to varying degrees from the content and essence of the former way of life. This system inevitably continues to evolve and improve”<sup>[ii]</sup>.

It is natural to raise the question of how socio-political processes and modernization influence the spiritual

development of society.

In our country, social progress and spiritual-enlightenment transformation can be observed only when spiritual development is achieved through the harmony of universal human values and fidelity to national values.

“As U.Muxtorov notes, the liberalization of the spiritual sphere means limiting the interference of the state and other organizations in a person’s spiritual life and spiritual processes, reducing their supervisory functions, ensuring the individual’s free and independent thinking, creating conditions for pluralism of opinions, establishing democracy and social justice, fostering an environment of tolerance, creating opportunities for each person’s personal freedom, ensuring human rights, and providing conditions for the realization of one’s knowledge and abilities in real life”<sup>[iii]</sup>. This viewpoint can be agreed with, since without prioritizing the spiritual sphere and freeing it from various centralized restrictions, merely speaking about spiritual development in citizens’ consciousness would clearly lack real substance. However, in the context of today’s rapidly intensifying global processes, without political initiative and oversight from the state and governing bodies, it becomes necessary to apply rational and effective governance mechanisms — and in certain cases, supervision — in order to prevent arbitrary interpretations and to limit one-sided understandings of spiritual life.

In this regard, it is also important to emphasize that in order to ensure the harmony of the spiritual activities of internal affairs bodies with social activity, the support of civil society institutions is of vital importance. Mutual cooperation in this sphere is based on the principles of the separation of state power and systematic mutual oversight. In particular, civil society institutions act as public watchdogs of society, while internal affairs bodies perform the role of executors of state authority.

Equally important is the effective mobilization of necessary opportunities and resources to ensure the stability of the spiritual environment through the protection of the interests of members of society. Cooperation between internal affairs bodies and civil society institutions is determined by mutual respect and the reciprocal recognition of each other’s respective powers and mandates. Successful cooperation for the benefit of society’s spiritual life cannot exist without mutual trust; both sides’ activities and social integration must be open to one another, involve regular exchange of essential information, and

require joint, sincere efforts — working side by side — to achieve common social goals.

In a stable society, successful cooperation is ensured through mutual recognition and respect for each party’s respective authorities and operational independence. Such relations facilitate the establishment of long-term, trust-based partnerships, transparent and open decision-making, coordination of joint actions, fair distribution of shared responsibilities, continuous dialogue, open information exchange, and the effective resolution of emerging social problems<sup>[iv]</sup>.

The stabilization of spiritual life in society is facilitated by the close and trustworthy cooperation between law enforcement agencies and civil society institutions, which allows for the effective identification and positive resolution of social problems. The systematic resolution of social issues requires the dynamic development of society, involving not only socio-political, economic, and cultural factors but also spiritual ones. In this process, the principles that constitute the essence of the progress of spiritual life are determined. Based on these principles, new methods of work and standards for gaining experience become widespread and gradually integrate into the socio-political activities of society.

If we consider the natural, historical, and socio-spiritual unity of society, its connection to a particular space, and its potential influence on the consciousness and way of life of its members, social and spiritual processes become visible in the relationships and social activities of society’s members. These relationships, activities, goals, needs, and aspirations serve as specific criteria. Indeed, alongside social processes, spiritual values shape the interactions among members of society and unite them toward common goals. In achieving certain results in economic, political, and other spheres of society, spiritual foundations contribute alongside material ones; in general, the role and contribution of social and spiritual life in societal development are clearly noticeable.

An important feature of civil society is that, guided by spiritual standards, it ensures the establishment of popular social control institutions in society. In this context, civil society institutions, integrated with leading state bodies, remain a vital component of society.

It is also important to note that today in our country, national institutions for ensuring human rights, such as the Ombudsman of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the National Center for Human Rights of Uzbekistan,

contribute a certain share to the development of social, legal, and spiritual activities through cooperation with state bodies.

In the post-independence period, in order to further enhance the effectiveness of the legal protection of human rights and freedoms, in addition to the aforementioned institutions, on September 12, 2008, the Ministry of Internal Affairs established the Department for the Protection of Human Rights and Legal Support, as well as its divisions and units within the regional departments of internal affairs. These bodies were tasked with ensuring the protection of human rights and freedoms enshrined in the Constitution and laws within the internal affairs bodies, establishing comprehensive cooperation with civil society institutions, and strengthening their legal foundations [v]. These documents and agreements in Uzbekistan not only serve as a legal framework and cooperation mechanism for protecting human rights, freedoms, and lawful interests, but also indicate the establishment of a legal and political system in society. They reflect the development of political awareness and thinking among society's members, the level of legal and political culture, principles of social justice and humanism, and the growth of a system of national and value-based relations characteristic of a social state, all of which contribute to achieving moral stability.

Thus, these institutions, by establishing systematic cooperation to ensure human rights and freedoms, studying the development of citizens' legal and political culture, and theoretically and practically supporting their transformation into genuine members of civil society, function as both a political-legal organization and a social institution.

The cooperative activities between internal affairs bodies and civil society development institutions must be conducted openly, transparently, and with regular reporting to the broader public. This not only increases public trust in societal development but also helps prevent abuses. Systematic cooperation among partners encourages active decision-making in society, which is a crucial factor for social stability. From this perspective, fostering mutual respect and trust among citizens ensures socio-spiritual stability in society.

From a legal standpoint, Article 11 of the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Internal Affairs Bodies" is dedicated to the cooperation of internal affairs bodies with other agencies and organizations. According to this article, internal affairs bodies, in order to fulfill their assigned duties, must cooperate — within the

framework established by legislation — with state authorities, local self-government bodies, and other organizations. Likewise, these authorities and organizations are required, within their competence, to assist internal affairs bodies in protecting citizens' rights, freedoms, and lawful interests; maintaining public order; ensuring public safety; preventing, detecting, and combating crimes and administrative offenses; investigating criminal cases; searching for criminals; locating missing persons; and supporting crime prevention activities [vi]. It is evident that, based on this law, internal affairs bodies must establish social-preventive cooperation not only with state institutions but also with non-governmental non-profit organizations and civil society institutions. This, in turn, ensures not only social stability in society but also addresses issues of moral and spiritual security. In other words, in this process, social integration is achieved toward a common goal.

For internal affairs bodies and civil society institutions to work together toward a common objective, it is necessary to develop practical plans, coordinate their efforts, and align them toward shared results. For effective cooperation, it is essential to systematize regular and productive dialogue between internal affairs bodies and civil society institutions.

It is appropriate here to recall a relevant legal document in this field. Specifically, the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated May 4, 2018, "On Measures to Radically Increase the Role of Civil Society Institutions in the Process of Democratic Renewal of the Country," highlights the existence of several systemic problems and shortcomings that hinder the active participation of non-governmental non-profit organizations in raising citizens' political culture and legal awareness, as well as meeting their spiritual and other non-material needs. In particular, the decree points out that effective and constructive mechanisms for state interaction with civil society had not been established, the needs of non-governmental non-profit organizations had not been systematically analyzed, and effective platforms for exchanging ideas on key issues of state and societal development had not been created.

Despite the existence of an adequate legislative framework, social partnership between state bodies and non-governmental non-profit organizations had not become an effective mechanism for addressing broad social problems, supporting citizens' initiatives — especially those of youth — and implementing modern ideas. Furthermore, interagency cooperation methods used by executive authorities to support the

activities of non-governmental non-profit organizations were ineffective, and there was no unified mechanism for information exchange between state bodies, among other issues<sup>[vii]</sup>.

Based on these problems, the decree emphasized the need to establish a modern, democratic, and transparent platform for high-level, systematic, and effective dialogue between the state and civil society institutions, uniting their efforts to accelerate and comprehensively develop the country.

In other words, based on this Decree, for the first time in Uzbekistan's political-legal practice, a dialogue between the President and non-governmental organizations was initiated through the establishment of the Advisory Council for the Development of Civil Society under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

This Advisory Council is tasked with creating a modern, democratic platform to unite the efforts of the state and civil society institutions in accelerating the country's development through high-level, systematic, and effective dialogue. The Council develops proposals for identifying strategic directions for the development of civil society, forming a distinctive systematic model, improving the organizational, legal, and economic foundations of civil society institutions, implementing social partnership and public oversight, and creating favorable conditions to expand the participation of these institutions in public governance. Additionally, the Council is responsible for submitting proposals to the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, developing indicators to assess the level of cooperation between civil society institutions and state bodies, and evaluating their contribution to the country's socio-economic development. It also assists civil society institutions in developing their international cooperation, studying best international practices, and implementing these practices in the context of Uzbekistan<sup>[viii]</sup>. These practical measures create opportunities for civil society institutions to establish a permanent and systematic platform for dialogue with state bodies, particularly internal affairs agencies, and to develop a social corridor for cooperation between them.

An important aspect of this direction — namely, the incentive for citizens and public organizations to actively participate in ensuring public safety, preventing offenses, and combating crime — has been established by Resolution No. 15 of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan, "On Approval of the Procedure for Incentivizing Citizens and Public

Organizations for Active Participation in Ensuring Public Safety, Preventing Offenses, and Combating Crime"<sup>[ix]</sup>. The Regulation approved by the Resolution defines the procedure for providing incentives — both material and otherwise — for citizens, non-governmental non-profit organizations, including religious organizations, and other civil society institutions for their active participation in preventing offenses and combating crime. It also establishes the procedure for ensuring the social protection of citizens, the types and grounds of incentives for citizens and public organizations, the procedure and amounts for material incentives, as well as the provision of social protection for citizens participating in this field<sup>[x]</sup>. The practical significance of these efforts is that strengthening cooperation between state bodies and civil society institutions ensures the social protection of citizens. By actively participating in the prevention of offenses and combating crime, citizens contribute to social, economic, cultural, and spiritual transformations in society. This engagement helps them become active, responsible members of society. In other words, awareness of rapidly ongoing reforms and the ability to adapt to various modern forms of global processes provides citizens with the opportunity to take initiative in developing effective socio-political mechanisms that promote societal progress.

Indeed, state bodies, non-governmental non-profit organizations, and other civil society institutions are considered subjects of social partnership. Moreover, the subjects of social partnership are responsible for ensuring social protection and support for the population, increasing its social activity, promoting employment, protecting public health, and establishing a healthy lifestyle. They also focus on the comprehensive development of a healthy younger generation, providing education, moral and ethical upbringing, and vocational guidance for youth; protecting maternity and childhood, as well as the rights of women; ensuring their full participation in the country's socio-political, socio-economic, and cultural life; fostering healthy families; enhancing citizens' legal knowledge, awareness, and legal culture; strengthening the foundations of civil society and a democratic legal state; promoting ideas of interethnic and intercultural harmony; reviving centuries-old traditional spiritual, moral, and historical-cultural values; and implementing similar practical measures<sup>[xi]</sup>.

In general, basing relations on the principles of social partnership is of great importance for sustainable, effective, and successful cooperation, allowing both parties to act openly toward one another and enabling

the regular exchange of necessary information.

In our view, the need and significance of expanding social partnership relations between internal affairs bodies and civil society institutions will remain relevant in further developing civil society, protecting democratic values, and achieving socio-spiritual stability in society by enhancing citizens' political and legal culture and awareness.

Moreover, the primary goal of implementing social partnership is to achieve socio-spiritual development, ensure the interests of society and individuals, develop effective practical measures for the progress of the state and society, and accelerate the development of civil society through organized cooperation among its subjects. This should be carried out based on the principle that "all reforms are primarily for people and their interests."

For the prosperity of society, an active and free citizenry — composed of people who care about public welfare, are determined, think innovatively, and are competent and adaptable to modern requirements — is a key indicator of civil society, which is closely linked

to moral life and spiritual development.

As the state and society develop, the demand for nurturing and strengthening moral foundations and principles also increases.

Equality is determined not only as a legal principle but also by the level of moral and social activity. Thus, the progress of society considers the well-being of citizens and their ability to live freely, with human development being the primary goal in achieving this. Indeed, the process of human development is continuous, and under the influence of society's political, economic, social, and cultural life, a person's capabilities and worldview gradually improve<sup>[xii]</sup>. This improvement also ensures the systematic implementation of social, economic, cultural, and political reforms in society.

Achieving societal progress is neither quick nor easy; it requires political, legal, and educational activity from members of society. By following its unique path, society gradually carries out systematic socio-political reforms aimed at ensuring sustainable development, strengthening democratic institutions, and enhancing the well-being and active participation of citizens.

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